Tafsir Ibn Kathir

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah

Al-Balad

Revealed in Makkah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

لاَ أُقْسِمُ بِهَـذَا الْبَلَدِ

90:1. Nay! I swear by this city;

وَأَنتَ حِلٌّ بِهَـذَا الْبَلَدِ

90:2 And you are free in this city.

وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدَ

90:3 And by the begetter and that which he begot.

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الإِنسَـنَ فِى كَبَدٍ

90:4 Verily, We have created man in Kabad.

أَيَحْسَبُ أَن لَّن يَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ

90:5 Does he think that none can overcome him.

يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَالاً لُّبَداً

90:6 He says: "I have wasted wealth in abundance!''

أَيَحْسَبُ أَن لَّمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ

90:7 Does he think that none sees him.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُ عَيْنَيْنِ

90:8 Have We not made for him two eyes.

وَلِسَاناً وَشَفَتَيْنِ

90:9 And a tongue and two lips.

وَهَدَيْنَـهُ النَّجْدَينِ

90:10 And shown him the two ways.

Swearing by the Sanctity of Makkah and Other Things that Man was created in Hardship

Allah says,

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ (١)

Nay! I swear by this city;

Here Allah has sworn by Makkah, the Mother of the Towns, addressing its resident (during the non-sacred months,) free in this city in order to draw his attention to the significance of its sanctity when its people are in the state of sanctity.

Khusayf reported from Mujahid;

لاَ أُقْسِمُ بِهَـذَا الْبَلَدِ

Nay! I swear by this city;

"The word **"La''** (Nay) refers to the refutation against them (Quraish). I swear by this city.''

Shabib bin Bishr narrated from Ikrimah, from Ibn Abbas that he said,

لاَ أُقْسِمُ بِهَـذَا الْبَلَدِ

Nay! I swear by this city;

"This means Makkah.''

Concerning the Ayah:

وَأَنتَ حِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ (٢)

And you are free in this city.

he (Ibn Abbas) said,

"O Muhammad! It is permissible for you to fight in it.''

Similar was reported from Sa`id bin Jubayr, Abu Salih, `Atiyah, Ad-Dahhak, Qatadah, As-Suddi and Ibn Zayd.

Al-Hasan Al-Basri said,

"Allah made it lawful (to fight in) for him (the Prophet) for one hour of a day.''

The meaning of what they have said was mentioned in a Hadith that is agreed- upon as being authentic. In it the Prophet said,

إِنَّ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ حَرَّمَهُ اللهُ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمواتِ وَالْأَرْضَ، فَهُوَ حَرَامٌ بِحُرْمَةِ اللهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

لَا يُعْضَدُ شَجَرُهُ وَلَا يُخْتَلَى خَلَاهُ،

وَإِنَّمَا أُحِلَّتْ لِي سَاعَةٌ مِنْ نَهَارٍ،

وَقَدْ عَادَتْ حُرْمَتُهَا الْيَوْمَ كَحُرْمَتِهَا بِالْأَمْسِ، أَلَا فَلْيُبَلِّغِ الشَّاهِدُ الْغَائِب

Verily, Allah made this city sacred on the Day that He created the heavens and the earth. Therefore, it is sacred by the sanctity of Allah until the Day of Judgement.

Its trees should not be uprooted, and its bushes and grasses should not be removed.

And it was only made lawful for me (to fight in) for one hour of a day.

Today its sanctity has been restored just as it was sacred yesterday. So, let the one who is present inform those who are absent.

In another wording of this Hadith, he said,

فَإِنْ أَحَدٌ تَرَخَّصَ بِقِتَالِ رَسُولِ اللهِ فَقُولُوا: إِنَّ اللهَ أَذِنَ لِرَسُولِهِ وَلَمْ يَأْذَنْ لَكُم

So, if anyone tries to use the fighting of the Messenger (to conquer Makkah) as an excuse (to fight there), then tell him that Allah permitted it for His Messenger and He has not permitted it for you.

Concerning Allah's statement,

وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدَ (٣)

And by the begetter and that which he begot.

Mujahid, Abu Salih, Qatadah, Ad-Dahhak, Sufyan Ath-Thawri, Sa`id bin Jubayr, As-Suddi, Al-Hasan Al-Basri, Khusayf, Shurahbil bin Sa`d and others have said,

"Meaning, by the begetter, Adam, and that which he begot is his children.''

This view that Mujahid and his companions have chosen is good and strong. This is supported by the fact that Allah swears by the Mother of the Towns, which are dwellings. Then after it He swears by the dwellers therein, who is Adam, the father of mankind, and his children.

Abu `Imran Al-Jawni said, "It refers to Ibrahim and his progeny.''

Ibn Jarir recorded this statement as did Ibn Abi Hatim.

Ibn Jarir preferred the view that it is general and it refers to every father and his children. This meaning is also acceptable.

Allah then says,

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ (٤)

Verily, We have created man in **Kabad**.

Ibn Abi Najih and Jurayj reported from `Ata, from Ibn Abbas concerning the phrase **`in Kabad'**,

"He was created while in hardship. Don't you see him''

Then he mentioned his birth and the sprouting of his teeth.

Mujahid said, فِى كَبَدٍ (in **Kabad**.)

"A drop of sperm, then a clot, then a lump of flesh, enduring in his creation.''

Mujahid then said, "This is similar to Allah's statement,

حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهاً وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهاً

His mother bears him with hardship. And she brings him forth with hardship. (46:15)

and she breast-feeds him with hardship, and his livelihood is a hardship. So he endures all of this.''

Sa`id bin Jubayr said, لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الإِنسَـنَ فِى كَبَدٍ (Verily, We have created man in **Kabad)**.

"In hardship and seeking livelihood.''

Ikrimah said, "In hardship and long-suffering.''

Qatadah said, "In difficulty.''

It is reported from Al-Hasan that he said,

"Enduring the hardships of the world by life and the severity of the Hereafter.''

Man is encompassed by Allah and His Bounties

Allah says,

أَيَحْسَبُ أَن لَّن يَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ (٥)

Does he think that none can overcome him.

Al-Hasan Al-Basri said that its Meaning that,

"no one is able to take his wealth.''

Qatadah about this has said,

"The Son of Adam thinks that he will not be asked about this wealth of his -- how he earned and how he spent it.''

Allah said:

يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُّبَدًا (٦)

He says: "I have wasted wealth in abundance!''

This means, the Son of Adam says,

"I spent an abundance of wealth.''

Mujahid, Al-Hasan, Qatadah, As-Suddi and others have said this.

أَيَحْسَبُ أَن لَّمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ (٧)

Does he think that none sees him.

Mujahid said,

"Does he think that Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, does not see him.''

Others among the Salaf have said similar to this.

Allah said;

أَلَمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُ عَيْنَيْنِ (٨)

Have We not made for him two eyes,

meaning, for him to see with them.

وَلِسَانًا ...

And a tongue,

meaning, for him to speak with, and so that he can express that which is inside of him.

وَشَفَتَيْنِ (٩) ...

and two lips,

In order to help him with speaking, eating food, and beautifying his face and his mouth.

The Ability to distinguish between Good and Evil is also a Blessing

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ (١٠)

And shown him the two ways,

This refers to the two paths.

Sufyan Ath-Thawri narrated from `Asim, from Zirr, from `Abdullah bin Mas`ud that he said, وَهَدَيْنَـهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ And shown him the two ways,

"The good and the evil.''

Similar to this has been reported from `Ali, Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Abu Wa'il, Abu Salih, Muhammad bin Ka`b, Ad-Dahhak, and `Ata' Al-Khurasani among others.

Similar to this Ayah is Allah's statement,

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الإِنسَـنَ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَّبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَـهُ سَمِيعاً بَصِيراً

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَـهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِراً وَإِمَّا كَفُوراً

Verily, We have created man from **Nutfah Amshaj**, in order to try him: so We made him hearer and seer.

Verily, We showed him the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful. (76:2-3)

فَلاَ اقتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ

90:11 But he has not attempted to pass on the path that is steep.

وَمَآ أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ

90:12 And what will make you know the path that is steep.

فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ

90:13 Freeing a neck.

أَوْ إِطْعَامٌ فِى يَوْمٍ ذِى مَسْغَبَةٍ

90:14 Or giving food in a day full of Masghabah,

يَتِيماً ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ

90:15 o an orphan near of kin.

أَوْ مِسْكِيناً ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ

90:16 Or to a Miskin cleaving to dust.

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْاْ بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْاْ بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ

90:17 Then he became one of those who believed and recommended one another to patience, and recommended one another to compassion.

أُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَـبُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ

90:18 They are those on the Right,

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ بِـَايَـتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَـبُ الْمَشْـَمَةِ

90:19 But those who disbelieved in Our Ayat, they are those on the Left.

عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُّؤْصَدَةٌ

90:20 Upon them Fire will Mu'sadah.

The Encouragement to traverse upon the Path of Goodness

Allah said,

فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ (١١)

But he has not attempted to pass on the path that is steep.

Ibn Zayd said,

"This means, will he not traverse upon the path which contains salvation and good.

Then He explains this path by His saying,

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ (١٢)

فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ (١٣)

أَوْ إِطْعَامٌ ...

And what will make you know the path that is steep?

- Freeing a neck,

- or giving food...''

Imam Ahmad recorded from Sa`id bin Marjanah that he heard Abu Hurayrah saying that the Messenger of Allah said,

مَنْ أَعْتَقَ رَقَبَةً مُؤمِنَةً أَعْتَقَ اللهُ بِكُلِّ إِرْبٍ أَيْ عُضْوٍ مِنْهَا إِرْبًا مِنْهُ مِنَ النَّارِ حَتْى إِنَّهُ لَيُعْتِقُ بِالْيَدِ الْيَدَ، وَبِالرِّجْلِ الرِّجْلَ، وَبِالْفَرْجِ الْفَرْج

Whoever frees a believing slave, Allah will free for every limb (of the slave) one of his limbs from the Fire. This is to such an extent that He (Allah) will free a hand for a hand, a leg for a leg, and a private part for a private part.

Ali bin Al-Husayn then said (to Sa`id), "Did you hear this from Abu Hurayrah''

Sa`id replied, "Yes.''

Then `Ali bin Al-Husayn said to a slave boy that he owned who was the swiftest of his servants, "Call Mutarrif!''

So when the slave was brought before him he said, "Go, for you are free for the Face of Allah.''

Al-Bukhari, Muslim, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i, all recorded this Hadith from Sa`id bin Marjanah.

Imam Ahmad recorded from `Amr bin `Abasah that the Prophet said,

مَنْ بَنَى مَسْجِدًا لِيُذْكَرَ اللهُ فِيهِ بَنَى اللهُ لَهُ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ

وَمَنْ أَعْتَقَ نَفْسًا مُسْلِمَةً كَانَتْ فِدْيَتَهُ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ

وَمَنْ شَابَ شَيْبَةً فِي الْإِسْلَامِ كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

- Whoever builds a Masjid so that Allah may be remembered in it, Allah will build a house for him in Paradise;

- and whoever frees a Muslim person, then it will be his ransom from Hell;

- and whoever grows grey in Islam, then it will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement.)

According to another route of transmission, Ahmad recorded from Abu Umamah, who reported from `Amr bin `Abasah that As-Sulami said to him,

"Narrate a Hadith to us that you heard from the Messenger of Allah, without any deficiency or mistakes.''

He (`Amr) said, "I heard him saying,

مَنْ وُلِدَ لَهُ ثَلَاثَةُ أَوْلَادٍ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ فَمَاتُوا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحِنْثَ أَدْخَلَهُ اللهُ الْجَنَّةَ بِفَضْلِ رَحْمَتِهِ إِيَّاهُمْ،

وَمَنْ شَابَ شَيْبَةً فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ،

وَمَنْ رَمَى بِسَهْمٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ بَلَغَ بِهِ الْعَدُوَّ أَصَابَ أَوْ أَخْطَأَ كَانَ لَهُ عِتْقُ رَقَبَةٍ،

وَمَنْ أَعْتَقَ رَقَبَةً مُؤْمِنَـةً أَعْتَقَ اللهُ بِكُلِّ عُضْوٍ مِنْهُ عُضْوًا مِنْهُ مِنَ النَّارِ،

وَمَنْ أَنْفَقَ زَوْجَيْنِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ فَإِنَّ لِلْجَنَّةِ ثَمَانِيَةَ أَبْوَابٍ يُدْخِلُهُ اللهُ مِنْ أَيِّ بَابٍ شَاءَ مِنْهَا

- Whoever has three children born to him in Islam, and they die before reaching the age of puberty, Allah will enter him into Paradise by virtue of His mercy to them.

- And whoever grows gray in the way of Allah (fighting Jihad), then it will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement.

- And whoever shoots an arrow in the way of Allah (fighting Jihad) that reaches the enemy, whether it hits or misses, he will get the reward of freeing a slave.

- And whoever frees a believing slave, then Allah will free each of his limbs from the Fire for every limb that the slave has.

- And whoever equipped two riding animals in the way of Allah (for fighting Jihad), then indeed Paradise has eight gates, and Allah will allow him to enter any of them he choses.''

Ahmad recorded this Hadith from different routes of transmission that are good and strong, and all praise is due to Allah.

Allah said,

... فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ (١٤)

Or giving food in a day full of **Masghabah**,

Ibn `Abbas said, "Of hunger." `

Ikrimah, Mujahid, Ad-Dahhak, Qatadah and others all said the same.

The word **`Saghb'** means hunger.

Then Allah says,

يَتِيمًا ...

To an orphan,

meaning, he gives food on a day like this to an orphan.

... ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ (١٥)

near of kin.

meaning, who is related to him.

Ibn Abbas, Ikrimah, Al-Hasan, Ad-Dahhak and As-Suddi all said this.

This is similar to what was related in a Hadith that was collected by Imam Ahmad on the authority of Salman bin Amir who said that he heard the Messenger of Allah say,

الصَّدَقَةُ عَلَى الْمِسْكِينِ صَدَقَةٌ وَعَلَى ذِي الرَّحِمِ اثْنَتَانِ:
صَدَقَةٌ وَصِلَةٌ

Charity given to the poor person is counted as one charity, while if it is given to a relative it is counted as two:

- charity and

- connecting the ties (of kinship).

At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasa'i both recorded this Hadith and its chain of narration is authentic.

Then Allah says,

أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ (١٦)

Or to a **Miskin** cleaving to dust **(Dha Matrabah)**.

meaning, poor, miserable, and clinging to the dirt.

It means those who are in a state of destitution.

Ibn `Abbas said,

"**Dha Matrabah** is that who is dejected in the street and who has no house or anything else to protect him against the dirt.''

Allah said;

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ...

Then he became one of those who believed,

meaning, then, along with these beautiful and pure characteristics, he was a believer in his heart, seeking the reward of that from Allah.

This is as Allah says,

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الاٌّخِرَةَ وَسَعَى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَـئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُم مَّشْكُورًا

And whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it, with the necessary effort due for it while he is believer, then such are the ones whose striving shall be appreciated. (17:19)

Allah also says,

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَـلِحاً مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ

Whoever works righteousness -- whether male or female -- while being a true believer.... (16:97)

Allah says,

... وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ (١٧)

and recommended one another to patience, and recommended one another to compassion.

meaning, he was from the believers who worked righteous deeds, and advised each other to be patient with the harms of the people, and to be merciful with them.

This is similar to what has been related in the noble Hadith,

الرَّاحِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمنُ،

ارْحَمُوا مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمْكُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاء

The merciful people will be treated with mercy by the Most Merciful (Allah).

Be merciful to those who are on the earth and He Who is above the heavens will be merciful to you.

In another Hadith he said,

لَا يَرْحَمُ اللهُ مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمِ النَّاس

Allah will not be merciful with whoever is not merciful with the people.

Abu Dawud recorded from Abdullah bin Amr that he narrated (from the Prophet),

مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيَعْرِفْ حَقَّ كَبِيرِنَا فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا

Whoever does not show mercy to our children, nor does he recognize the right of our elders, then he is not of us.

Then Allah says,

أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ (١٨)

They are those on the Right,

meaning, those who have these characteristics are the companions of the Right Hand.

The Companions of the Left Hand and Their Recompense

Then Allah says,

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ (١٩)

But those who disbelieved in Our Ayat, they are those on the Left.

meaning, the companions of the Left Hand.

عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُّؤْصَدَةٌ (٢٠)

Upon them Fire will **Mu'sadah**.

> meaning, it will be sealed over them and there will be no way for them to avoid it, nor will they have any way out.

Abu Hurayrah, Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Sa`id bin Jubayr, Mujahid, Muhammad bin Ka`b Al-Qurazi, `Atiyah Al-`Awfi, Al-Hasan, Qatadah and As-Suddi, all said,

> مُّؤْصَدَةٌ Mu'sadah, "This means shut.''

Ibn `Abbas said,

> "Its doors will be closed.''

Ad-Dahhak said, مُّؤْصَدَةٌ Mu'sadah.

> "It will be sealed over them and it will have no door.''

Qatadah said, مُّؤْصَدَةٌ Mu'sadah.

> "It will be shut and there will be no light in it, no crevice (escape), and no way out of it forever.''

This is the end of the Tafsir of Surah **Al-Balad**, and all praise and blessings are due to Allah.